(b) if so, whether the power balance has been disturbed in the Sub-continent, posing serious threat to the security of the nation due to supply of military weapons, including secret intelligence information, by China to Pakistan;

(c) if so, the reaction of Government thereto;

(d) whether Government have registered their protest with the Government of China; and

(e) if so, when and the reaction of China thereto?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI I. K. GUJRAL): (a) to (e) Government are aware of reports regarding defence cooperation between China and Pakistan and supply of military equipment and technology by China to Pakistan.

Government have consistently stated that the acquisition of weapons by Pakistan beyond its legitimate requirements poses a threat to India's security and is not conducive to the maintenance of peace and stability in the region. Government's concern regarding Pakistan's weapons oriented nuclear and missile development programmes is well known and have been conveyed to China.

(d) China's response has been that its military exports to Pakistan are part of normal state-to-state cooperation, that they are limited and that they do not affect the balance of power in the region. China has also said that it does not support or assist other countries in developing nuclear weapons,

Government are continuing to take all necessary measures to safeguard India's security.

Steps to Reduce Water Consumption in Flushes

*238. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of URBAN AFFAIRS & EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that according to a study, about 12 to 15th of water is used every time one uses the flush knob, as repoted in 'The Times of India' dated the 1st July, 1997;

(b) whether Government have made any assessment of the total water consumed everyday in the country;

(c) whether Government propose to take any measures to reduce such consumption of water so that more water would be available in the cities; if so,the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (DR. U. VENKATESWARLU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No detailed survey has been done by the Union Government. However, it is assessed that by using the conventional cistern, about 3200 mld (million litres per day) of water is consumed in urban areas of the country for flushing purpose.

(c) and (d) The Union Government propogates conservation of water as a matter of policy, including measures such as recycling and reuse of waste water. Water supply and sanitation being State subjects, actual implementation of such measures is the responsibility of the State Governments and Urban Local Bodies.

Central Legislation for Agricultural Workers

*239. DR. B. B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Central legislation for agricultural workers has been hanging in balance for over a decade because of opposition from State Governments;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the present status of the draft Agricultural Workers Bill;

(d) whether the issue was also discussed at the Labour Ministers' Conference held recently;

(e) if so, the outcome thereof;

(f) whether the proposed Bill would be passed during the current Monsoon Session; and

(g) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI M. P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) to (g) The issue of bringing up a Central Bill on Agricultural Workers has been under Govt.'s consideration for quite sometime mainly on account of varied perceptions of the State Govts arising out of different agro-climating and diverse socio-economic conditions prevailing in different parts of the country. A draft Bill on the subject drawn up by the Central Govt. was again discussed in the Conference of the State Labour Ministers' held on 07-08 July, 1997. The Conference could not reach any unanimous conclusion on the issue. Government's endeavour is to finalise the Bill and introduce it in the Parliament at the earliest.

Making of the Hepatitis-C Screening Mandatory

*240. SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have issued notification making the Hepatitis-C screening mandatory from 1st of July, 1997;

(b) whether Government had adequate stock of kits for supplying to all the Central, State and other NGOs who are maintaining blood banks in the country before issue of the notification;

(c) if so, the details thereof and its distribution for ensuring the safety of the blood by these agencies, State-wise; and

(d) if not, what further steps Government propose to take in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) The possibility of inclusion of Hepatitis-C testing in blood requires an indepth deliberation among Blood Transfusion Officers, Technologists and Administrators to have a techno-economical analysis and to work out a timeframe before adopting this test as mandatory. Till that time the HCV testing will remain voluntary.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Purchase of Critical Long-Delivery Equipments

1706. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had purchased critical long-delivery equipments, in advance, at a cost of Rs. 1366 crores for the plants for generating 10,000 MW of electricity by 2000 A.D.;

(b) whether it is a fact that Government had placed another order for material worth Rs. 950 crores for the same;

(c) if so, what is the total expenditure, so far, incurred in this behalf; and

(d) whether the proposal has since been abandoned and if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI S. R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN): (a) and (b) Advance procurement of critical and long-delivery items of equipment and components for six 500 MWe Units and four 220 MWe units at a cost of Rs. 1511 crore was authorised by the Government as part of the proposal to install 10,000 MWe of nuclear power generating capacity by 2000 A.D. This was done to